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Message Text

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FEBRUARY 20, 1974.

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT UK (NI)
SUBJECT: 48 CANDIDATES CONTEST GENERAL ELECTION IN NI.

SUMMARY: 48 CANDIDATES ARE SEEKING NORTHERN IRELAND'S 12 SEATS IN WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENT. UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL IS BACKING SINGLE CANDIDATE IN EACH CONSTITUENCY. ELECTION IS CONTRIBUTING FURTHER TO ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN SUPPORTERS OF WEST AND FAULKNER WITHIN ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY. (FAULKNERITES) PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST HAVE SEVEN CANDIDATES ESPOUSHING FAULKNERS POLICIES WITH EMPHASIS ON RETAINING POSITION WITHIN UK AND NOT LETTING COUNCIL OF IRELAND BECOME STEPPING STONE TO IRISH UNITY IN ORDER TO KEEP VOTERS FROM STRAYING TO UUUC. ALLIANCE HAS ONLY THREE CANDIDATES AND URGES BACKERS ELSEHWERE TO SUPPORT AN EXECUTIVE PARTY CANDIDATE. SDLP HAS CANDIDATES IN ALL 12 CONSTITUENCIES CLAIMING PARTY HAS KEPT ITS 1973 ASSEMBLY ELECTION PROMISES ON PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL OF IRELAND POLICING INTERNMENT. NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY HAS FOUR CANDIDATES PUSHING ECONOMIC ISSUES BUT KEEPING DISTANCE FROM HAROLD WILSON. REPUBLICAN CLUBS (POLITICAL WING OF OFFICIAL IRA) DENOUNCE SDLP "SELL-OUT" ON INTERNMENT. PROVISIONAL SIN FEIN (STILL PROSCRIBED IN NORTH) WILL NOT CONTEST ELECTION OR SUPPORT CANDIDATES BUT HAS NOT CALLED FOR BOYCOTT. REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES
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IN BELFAST WEST THREATEN FERRY FITTS SEAT, ELECTION HERE IS

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CLEARLY ABOUT LEGITIMACY OF PRESENT NI POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. FORTYEIGHT CANDIDATES ARE STANDING FOR NORTHERN IRELANDS 12 WESTMINSTER SEATS.

2. UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL INCLUDING HARRY WESTS ULSTER UNIONISTS PAISLEYS DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS CRAIGS VANGUARD UNIONISTS AND FOUR ORANGE-RELATED INSTITUTIONS HAS SUCCEEDED IN AGREEING TO BACK SINGLE CANDIDATE IN EACH CONSTITUENCY. THE CANDIDATES WILL STAND AS "UNITED ULSTER UNIONISTS" ON PLATFORM DENOUNCING CONSTITUTION ACT IMPOSED POWER-SHARING EXECUTIVE AND SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT. SEVEN OF CANDIDATES ARE ULSTER UNIONISTS THREE ARE VANGUARD AND TWO ARE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST. ALL THREE PARTY LEADERS ARE STANDING.

3. AS EXPECTED, GENERAL ELECTION HAS LED TO FURTHER ESTRANGEMENT WITHIN UNIONIST PARTY BETWEEN SUPPORTERS OF LEADER HARRY WEST AND THOSE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE BRIAN FAULKNER. UNIONIST IMPERIAL (EI WESTMINSTER) CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS WHICH ARE AFFILIATED TO NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATIONS AND NOT TO WEST-CONTROLLED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL HAVE PICKED FIVE WEST SUPPORTERS AND FIVE FAULKNERITES. LATER CALLING SELVES "PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS" HAVE CRITICIZED WEST GROUP FOR ENDORSING UUUC CANDIDATES OVER OFFICIALLY-SELECTED UNIONISTS AND FOR SUBMITTING OWN SUCH CANDIDATES TO PROCESS OF RATIFICATION BY UUUC STEERING COMMITEE (WHICH IN ONE CONSTITUENCY LED TO WITHDRAWAL OF OFFICIALLY-SELECTED ULSTER UNIONIST IN FAVOR OF VANGUARD CANDIATE). FAULKNERITES SAY THEY NO LONGER RECOGNIZE WEST AS ULSTER UNIONIST LEADER. WEST FACTION IN TURN REJECTS CANDIDACIES OF PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS ON GROUNDS THEY DO NOT SUPPORT ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL POLICIES AGAINST SUNNINGDALE AND EXECUTIVE (ALTHOUGH IN FACT UUC HAS NOT YET GO ROUND TO RETRACTING ITS NOVEMBER 20 ENDORSEMENT OF POWER-SHARING).

4. IN THREE CONSTITUENCIES THE TWO FACTIONS ARE DIRECTLY OPPOSING ONE ANOTHER EACH CLAIMING TO BE TRUE UNIONIST. UNEDIFYING TO OUTSIDERS THESE ISSUES ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY WITHIN PARTY BECAUSE PARTY WORKERS ESTIMATE THAT ABOUT ONE QUARTER OF UNIONIST VOTERS WILL SUPPORT WHOMEVER THEY BELIEVE TO BE THE
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TRUE UNIONIST. BOTH FACTIONS APPEAR TO HAVE RENOUNCED HOPES OF RECONCILIATION AND TO SEEK ONLY TO CLAIM MANTLE OF TRUE UNIONIST IDEOLOGICAL SUCCESSION WHEN INEVITABLE PARTY SPLIT COMES.

5. PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS ARE FIELDING SEVEN CANDIDATES WHO WHILE CONDUCTING OWN CAMPAIGNS HAVE AGREED ON SIX FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES

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(A) SUPPORT FOR NI WITHIN UK AND OPPOSITION TO "COALITION OF PARTIES LED BY MR PAISLEY ADVOCATING INDEPENENDENCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND"

(B) DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY INTO EFFECTIVE BODY PROVIDING DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT.

(C) COUNCIL OF IRELAND MUST NOT BE OR BECOME "STAGING POST TO IRISH UNITY" AND CANNOT EVEN COME INTO BEING IF DUBLIN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACT EFFECTIVELY AGAINST CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM AND FUGITIVE TERRORISTS AND RECOGNIZE NORTHERN IRELANDS RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION WITHIN UK. IF FUTURE DUBLIN GOVERNMENT SHOULD GO BACK ON THESE UNDERTAKINGS "COUNCIL OF IRELAND WILL CEASE." (COMMENT PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS REGARD COUNCIL OF IRELAND AS MOST SENSITIVE ISSUE WITH TRADITIONAL UNIONISTS AND WILL MAKE MORE MILITANT STATEMENTS ON THIS DURING CAMPAIGN)

(D) FIRMER SECURITY POLICIES ESPECIALLY NEAR BORDER

(E) DENUNCIATION OF ALL "SUBVERSIVE DESTRUCTIVE ABSTENTIONIST OR DISRUPTIVE TACTICS "WHICH" BRING TRADITIONAL UNITED KINGDOM CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT INTO DISREPUTE " AND

(F) "FIRM AND FAIR ECONOMIC POLICIES FOR BRINGING INFLATION UNDER CONTROL" (COMMENT THIS IS ONLY BOW TO UNIONISTS TRADITIONAL LINKS WITH BRITISH CONSERVATIVES).

6. PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS MAY PURSUE SEPARATE STRATEGIES IN THE FIVE CONSTITUENCIES THEY ARE NOT CONTESTING. FAULKNER HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL NOT VOTE IN HIS OWN UNIONIST BACKED DOWN SOUTH CONSTITUENCY WHERE INCUMBENT ULSTER UNIONIST BACKED BY UUUC FACES CHALLENGE FROM SDLP AND REPUBLICAN CLUBS. SIMILAR CALLS FOR ABSTENTION ARE ANTICIPATED IN BELFAST WEST AND LONDONDERRY WHERE SDLP AND UUUC ARE LEADING CONTENDERS. IN ARMAGH AND ANTRIM SOUTH ALLIANCE PARTY CANDIDATES ARE PROTESTANTS SOUNDING LIKE FAULKNER UNIONISTS. ONLY OTHER ALLIANCE CANDIDATE IN BELFAST SOUTH IS NOT THOUGHT LIKELY TO THREATEN INCUMBENCY OF A PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST AND ALLIANCE
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IS CALLING ON ITS SUPPORTERS IN CONSTITUENCIES WITHOUT ALLIANCE CANDIDATES TO VOTE FOR PRO-EXECUTIVE CANDIDATE.

7. SDLP DECIDED AFTER ALL TO FIELD 12 CANDIDATES. PARTY'S ELECTION MANIFESTO CLAIMS PARTY HAS KEPT FAITH WITH JUNE 1973 ELECTION PROMISES FOR "A NEW NORTH A NEW IRELAND -- PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP" THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL OF IRELAND. ON INTERNMENT, MANIFESTO SAYS SDLP HAS SECURED COMMITMENT FROM HMG TO PHASE IT OUT, AND HAS OBTAINED RELEASE OF MANY HUNDREDS OF INTERNEES, WHILE REPUBLICIAN CRITICS HAVE NOT OBTAINED RELEASE OF A SINGLE INTERNEE. ON POLICING, SDLP POINTS TO CHANGES ENVISAGED IN SUNNINGDALE WHICH SHOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR BOTH TRADITIONS TO IDENTIFY WITH POLICE, SO BRITISH ARMY CAN BE WITHDRAWN FROM STREETS OF NI. COMMENTATORS HAVE POINTED OUT CONTRASTS BETWEEN MANIFESTOS OF SDLP AND

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PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS ON IRISH UNITY, BUT SDLP POINTS OUT THAT COALITION EXISTS ONLY IN GOVERNMENT, WHILE PARTY ELEMENTS OF IT RETAIN SEPARATE IDENTITY. IN PRACTIVE THIS DIVERGENCE SHOULD DO EXECUTIVE LITTLE HARM, SINCE SDLP IS SEEKING TO PRVENT EROSION OF JUNE 1973 GAINS TO REPUBLICANS, WHILE PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS ARE FIGHTING FOR PROTESTANT VOTES.

8. REPUBLICAN CLUBS (NORTHERN WING OF OFFICIAL SINN FEIN) HAVE FOUR CANDIDATES AND WILL ALSO BACK MID-ULSTER INCUMBENT/ BERNADETTE DEVLIN MCLAISKEY. REPUBLICAN CLUBS DECRY EXECUTIVE AS COALITION OF MIDDLE-CLASS COLLABORATE WITH BRITISH CAPITALISM, AND CALL FOR NON-SECTARISM IRISH WORKING CLASS COALITION TO ACHIEVE UNITED SOCIALIST IRELAND. THEY BLAST SDLP FOR TAKING PART IN EXECUTIVE WH
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